

Yoruba language

Yoruba /ˈjɒrʊbə/^[3] (Yor. *Èdè Yorùbá*) is a language spoken in West Africa and most prominently South western Nigeria. The number of speakers of Yoruba is estimated between 30 and 40 million, primarily by the ethnic Yoruba people.^{[4][5][6]} It is a pluricentric language spoken principally in Nigeria and Benin, with communities in Sierra Leone, Liberia, other parts of Africa, the Americas, and Europe. The non-vernacular remains of the language in the Caribbean, Lucumi, is the liturgical language of the Santería religion of the region. Many Yoruba words are used in the Afro-Brazilian religion known as Candomblé. Yoruba language is also used in many other Afro-American religions in the Americas and the Caribbean. Yoruba is most closely related to the Itsekiri language (spoken in the Niger Delta) and to Igala (spoken in central Nigeria).^[1]

Contents
History
Yoruboid languages
Varieties
Literary Yoruba
Writing system
Phonology
Vowels
Consonants
Tone
Tonality effects and computer-coded documents
Assimilation and elision
Grammar
Arabic influence
Some loanwords
Literature
Spoken literature
Written literature
Music
Dance
See also
Notes and references
Notes
References

Yoruba	
<i>Èdè Yorùbá</i>	
Native to	Nigeria, Benin, Togo
Ethnicity	Yoruba
Native speakers	40 million (2015) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Niger–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Atlantic–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Volta-Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Volta–Niger<ul style="list-style-type: none">YEAI<ul style="list-style-type: none">Yoruboid<ul style="list-style-type: none">Edekiri<ul style="list-style-type: none">Yoruba</div>
Writing system	Latin (Yoruba alphabet) <div></div> Yoruba Braille <div></div> Arabic script (formerly)
Official status	
Official language in	 Nigeria Benin Togo
Language codes	
ISO 639-1	yo (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=yo)
ISO 639-2	yor (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=496)
ISO 639-3	yor

History
Dictionaries
Grammars and sketches

External links

Glottolog yoru1245 (<http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/yoru1245>)^[2]

Linguasphere 98-AAA-a

History

Yoruba is classified among the Edekiri languages, which together with Itsekiri and the isolate Igala form the Yoruboid group of languages within the Volta–Niger branch of the Niger–Congo family. The linguistic unity of the Niger–Congo family dates to deep prehistory, estimates ranging around 15,000 years ago (the end of the Upper Paleolithic).^[7] In present-day Nigeria, it is estimated that there are over 40 million Yoruba primary and secondary language speakers as well as several other millions of speakers outside Nigeria, making it the most widely spoken African language outside of the continent.

Yoruboid languages

Group	Name(s)	Location(s)	Largest dialects	Native speakers	countr(y)(ies)	Comment
<u>Igala languages</u>	<u>Igala</u>	Eastern <u>Kogi State</u> , in and around the areas of <u>Dekina</u> , <u>Ankpa</u> , <u>Idah</u> , <u>ibaji</u> , <u>Omala</u> , <u>Igalamela-Odolu</u> Etc.	<u>Ife</u> , <u>Ankpa</u> , <u>Dekina</u> , <u>Ibaji</u> , <u>Ebu</u> , <u>Idah</u>	2.1 million	<u>Nigeria</u>	Most divergent Yoruboid language (earliest split) & Easternmost Yoruboid language
	<u>Ogugu</u>	Eastern Kogi State, Northern <u>Enugu State</u> , <u>Uzo Uwani</u> , <u>Igbo Eze North</u> , <u>Nsukka Local Government Areas</u>	_____	160,000	<u>Nigeria</u>	A divergent Igala dialect
<u>Edekiri languages</u>	<u>Ede languages</u>	Southern, Central and Northern <u>Benin</u> , Central <u>Togo</u> , in and around: <u>Porto-Novo</u> , <u>Pobè</u> , <u>Adjarra</u> , <u>Bantè</u> , <u>Savé</u> , <u>Tchaourou</u> , <u>Sakété</u> , <u>Ketou</u> , <u>Cové</u> , <u>Glazoue</u> , <u>Adja-Ouèrè</u> , <u>Bassila</u> , <u>Dassa-Zoumé</u> (Benin). <u>Atakpame</u> , <u>Goubi</u> , <u>Anié</u> , <u>Moretan</u> , <u>Kambole</u> , (Togo)	<u>Ede Ife</u> , <u>Ede Isha</u> , <u>Idaasha</u> , <u>Ede Shabe</u> , <u>Ede Ije</u> , <u>Kambole</u> , <u>Ede Nago</u> , <u>Ede Kura</u> , <u>Manigri</u> Etc.	1.4 million	<u>Benin</u> , <u>Togo</u> , <u>Nigeria</u>	A cluster of closely related dialects in Western <u>Yorubaland</u> , with more than 95% <u>Lexical similarity</u> to standard Yoruba
	<u>Itsekiri</u>	Western Delta state in <u>Warri South</u> , <u>Warri North</u> , <u>Warri South West</u> , <u>Sapele</u> and <u>Ethiope West LGA's</u> . <u>Edo State</u> in <u>Ikpoba Okha</u> , <u>Oredo</u> and <u>Ovia South-West LGA's</u>	_____	1 million	<u>Nigeria</u>	A Yoruba dialect of the western <u>Niger Delta</u> & easternmost Edekiri dialect
	<u>Yoruba</u>	South West, North Central & Mid-West Nigeria: <u>Ondo</u> , <u>Edo</u> , <u>Kwara</u> , <u>Ekiti</u> , <u>Lagos</u> , <u>Ogun</u> , <u>Kogi</u> , <u>Oyo</u> , <u>Osun</u> . East & Central Benin: <u>Plateau</u> , <u>Collines</u> , <u>Ouémé</u> , <u>Zou</u> , <u>Borgu</u> Etc.	<u>Ekiti</u> , <u>Ife</u> , <u>Ijebu</u> , <u>Oworo</u> , <u>Ijesha</u> , <u>Akoko</u> , <u>Ikale</u> , <u>Okun</u> , <u>Oyo</u> , <u>Egba</u> , <u>Awori</u> , <u>Igbomina</u> , <u>Owo</u> , <u>Idanre</u> , <u>Egbado</u> , <u>Ilaje</u> , <u>Ketu</u> , <u>Ikale</u> , <u>Mokole</u> , <u>Ondo</u> Etc.	40 million	<u>Nigeria</u> , <u>Benin</u> , <u>Americas</u>	By far the largest of the Yoruboid languages, and the <u>Niger–Congo</u> language with the largest number of L1 speakers.
	<u>Olukumi</u>	Isolated within <u>Edoid languages</u> in <u>Edo</u> and <u>Delta states</u> , <u>Oshimili North</u> and <u>Esan South-East Local government Areas</u> .	_____	17,000 (?)	<u>Nigeria</u>	An isolated Yoruba dialect on the Western flanks of the Niger

The Yoruba group is assumed to have developed out of undifferentiated Volta–Niger populations by the 1st millennium BC. Settlements of early Yoruba speakers are assumed to correspond to those found in the wider Niger area from about the 4th century BC, especially at Ife. The North-West Yoruba dialects show more linguistic innovation than the Southeast and Central dialects. This, combined with the fact that the latter

areas generally have older settlements, suggests a later date for migration into Northwestern Yorubaland.^[8] According to the Kay Williamson Scale, the following is the degree of relationship between Itsekiri and other Yoruboid dialects, using a compiled word list of the most common words. A similarity of 100% would mean a total overlap of two dialects, while a similarity of 0 would mean two speech areas that have absolutely no relationship.

% Similarity	<u>Igala</u>	<u>Ijumu (Okun)</u>	<u>Standard Yoruba</u>	<u>Ijesha</u>	<u>Ekiti</u>	<u>Ijebu</u>	<u>Oba (Akoko)</u>	<u>Ondo</u>	<u>Ilaje</u>	<u>Ikale</u>
<u>Itsekiri</u>	60.0%	70.3%	71.5%	72.0%	74.2%	75.3%	78.4%	78.4%	80.4%	82.3%

The result of the wordlist analysis shows that Itsekiri bears the strongest similarity to the SEY dialects and most especially Ilaje and Ikale, at 80.4% and 82.3% similarity. According to the language assessment criteria of the International Language Assessment Conference (1992), only when a wordlist analysis shows a lexical similarity of below 70% are two speech forms considered to be different languages. An overlap of 70% and above indicates that both speech forms are the same language, although dialect intelligibility tests would need to be carried out to determine how well speakers of one dialect can understand the other speech form. Thus while the analysis shows that Igala, with an overlap of 60% is a completely different language, all other Yoruboid speech forms are merely dialects of the same Language.

Varieties

The Yoruba dialect continuum itself consists of several dialects. The various Yoruba dialects in the Yorubaland of Nigeria can be classified into five major dialect areas: Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southwest and Southeast.^[9] Clear boundaries cannot be drawn, peripheral areas of dialectal regions often having some similarities to adjoining dialects.

- **North-West Yoruba (NWY)**
 - Egba, Ibadan, Egbado/Yewa, Ọyọ, Western Ogun, Lagos/Eko.
- **North-East Yoruba (NEY)**
 - Yagba, Owe, Ijumu, Oworo, Gbede, Abunu.
- **Central Yoruba (CY)**
 - Igbomina, Ijesha, Ifẹ, Ekiti, Akure, Ẹfọn.
- **South-East Yoruba (SEY)**
 - Ikale, Ilaje, Ondo City, Ọwọ, Idanre, Akoko, Remo, Ijebu.
- **South-West Yoruba (SWY)**
 - Ketu, Awori, Sakété, Ifè (Togo), Idasha, Ipokia/Anago.

North-West Yoruba is historically a part of the Ọyọ Empire. In NWY dialects, Proto-Yoruba velar fricative /ɣ/ and labialized voiced velar /gʷ/ have merged into /w/; the upper vowels /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ were raised and merged with /i/ and /u/, just as their nasal counterparts, resulting in a vowel system with seven oral and three nasal vowels.

South-East Yoruba was probably associated with the expansion of the Benin Empire after c. 1450.^[10] In contrast to NWY, lineage and descent are largely multilineal and cognatic, and the division of titles into war and civil is unknown. Linguistically, SEY has retained the /ɣ/ and /gʷ/ contrast, while it has lowered the nasal vowels /ĩ/ and /ũ/ to /ɛ̃/ and /ɔ̃/, respectively. SEY has collapsed the second and third person plural

pronominal forms; thus, *àn án wá* can mean either 'you (pl.) came' or 'they came' in SEY dialects, whereas NWY for example has *ẹ wá* 'you (pl.) came' and *wón wá* 'they came', respectively. The emergence of a plural of respect may have prevented coalescence of the two in NWY dialects.

Central Yoruba forms a transitional area in that the lexicon has much in common with NWY, and it shares many ethnographical features with SEY. Its vowel system is the least innovating (most stable) of the three dialect groups, having retained nine oral-vowel contrasts and six or seven nasal vowels and an extensive vowel harmony system. Peculiar to Central and Eastern (NEY, SEY) Yoruba also, is the ability to begin words with the vowel [ɔ:] which in Western Yoruba has been changed to [ɪ:]

Literary Yoruba

Literary Yoruba, also known as *Standard Yoruba*, *Yoruba koiné*, and *common Yoruba*, is a separate member of the dialect cluster. It is the written form of the language, the standard variety learned at school and that spoken by newsreaders on the radio. Standard Yoruba has its origin in the 1850s, when Samuel A. Crowther, the first native African Anglican bishop, published a Yoruba grammar and started his translation of the Bible. Though for a large part based on the Ọyọ and Ibadan dialects, Standard Yoruba incorporates several features from other dialects.^[11] It also has some features peculiar to itself, for example the simplified vowel harmony system, as well as foreign structures, such as calques from English which originated in early translations of religious works.

Because the use of Standard Yoruba did not result from some deliberate linguistic policy, much controversy exists as to what constitutes 'genuine Yoruba', with some writers holding the opinion that the Ọyọ dialect is the most "pure" form, and others stating that there is no such thing as genuine Yoruba at all. Standard Yoruba, the variety learnt at school and used in the media, has nonetheless been a powerful consolidating factor in the emergence of a common Yoruba identity.

Writing system

In the 17th century, Yoruba was written in the Ajami script, a form of Arabic script.^{[12][13]} Modern Yoruba orthography originated in the early work of Church Mission Society missionaries working among the *Aku* (Yoruba) of Freetown. One of their informants was Crowther, who later would proceed to work on his native language himself. In early grammar primers and translations of portions of the English Bible, Crowther used the Latin alphabet largely without tone markings. The only diacritic used was a dot below certain vowels to signify their open variants [ɛ] and [ɔ], viz. ⟨ẹ⟩ and ⟨ọ⟩. Over the years the orthography was revised to represent tone among other things. In 1875, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) organised a conference on Yoruba Orthography; the standard devised there was the basis for the orthography of the steady flow of religious and educational literature over the next seventy years.

The current orthography of Yoruba derives from a 1966 report of the Yoruba Orthography Committee, along with Ayọ Bamgboṣe's 1965 *Yoruba Orthography*, a study of the earlier orthographies and an attempt to bring Yoruba orthography in line with actual speech as much as possible. Still largely similar to the older orthography, it employs the Latin alphabet modified by the use of the digraph ⟨gb⟩ and certain diacritics, including the traditional vertical line set under the letters ⟨ẹ⟩, ⟨ọ⟩, and ⟨ṣ⟩. In many publications the line is replaced by a dot ⟨ẹ̣⟩, ⟨ọ̣⟩, ⟨ṣ̣⟩. The vertical line had been used to avoid the mark being fully covered by an underline.

A B D E Ẹ F G Gb H I J K L M N O Ọ P R S Ṣ T U W Y

a b d e ẹ f g gb h i j k l m n o ọ p r s ṣ t u w y

The Latin letters ⟨c⟩, ⟨q⟩, ⟨v⟩, ⟨x⟩, ⟨z⟩ are not used.

The pronunciation of the letters without diacritics corresponds more or less to their International Phonetic Alphabet equivalents, except for the labial–velar consonant [kp̚] (written ⟨p⟩) and [gb̚] (written ⟨gb⟩), in which both consonants are pronounced simultaneously rather than sequentially. The diacritic underneath vowels indicates an open vowel, pronounced with the root of the tongue retracted (so ⟨ẹ⟩ is pronounced [ɛ̠] and ⟨ọ⟩ is [ɔ̠]). ⟨s⟩ represents a postalveolar consonant [ʃ] like the English ⟨sh⟩, ⟨y⟩ represents a palatal approximant like English ⟨y⟩, and ⟨j⟩ a voiced palatal stop [j], as is common in many African orthographies.

In addition to the vertical bars, three further diacritics are used on vowels and syllabic nasal consonants to indicate the language's tones: an acute accent ⟨´⟩ for the high tone, a grave accent ⟨`⟩ for the low tone, and an optional macron ⟨¯⟩ for the middle tone. These are used in addition to the line in ⟨ẹ⟩ and ⟨ọ⟩. When more than one tone is used in one syllable, the vowel can either be written once for each tone (for example, *⟨òó⟩ for a vowel [o] with tone rising from low to high) or, more rarely in current usage, combined into a single accent. In this case, a caron ⟨ˇ⟩ is used for the rising tone (so the previous example would be written ⟨ř⟩) and a circumflex ⟨^⟩ for the falling tone.

Á À Ã É È Ē Ẹ / Ẹ́ Ẹ́ / Ẹ́ Ẹ́ / Ẹ́ Ẹ́ / Ẹ́ Í Ì Ī Ó Ò Õ Ọ / Ọ́ Ọ́ / Ọ́ Ọ́ / Ọ́ Ọ́ / Ọ́ Ú Û Ū Ş / Ş
á à ã é è ē ẹ / ẹ̀ ẹ̀ / ẹ̀ ẹ̀ / ẹ̀ ẹ̀ / ẹ̀ ẹ̀ / ẹ̀ í ì ï ó ò õ ọ / ọ́ ọ́ / ọ́ ọ́ / ọ́ ọ́ / ọ́ ú ù ū ş / ş

In Benin, Yoruba uses a different orthography. The Yoruba alphabet was standardized along with other Benin languages in the National Languages Alphabet by the National Language Commission in 1975, and revised in 1990 and 2008 by the National Center for Applied Linguistics.

Benin alphabet

A B D E Ɛ F G Gb H I J K Kp L M N O ɔ P R S Sh T U W Y
a b d e ɛ f g gb h i j k kp l m n o ɔ p r s sh t u w y

Phonology

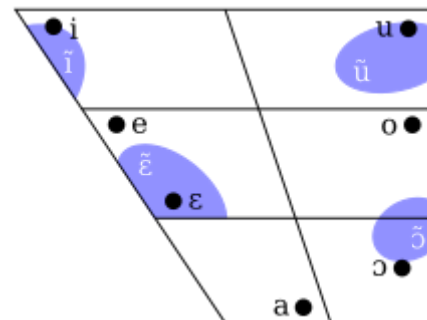
The three possible syllable structures of Yoruba are consonant+vowel (CV), vowel alone (V), and syllabic nasal (N). Every syllable bears one of the three tones: high ⟨´⟩, mid ⟨¯⟩ (generally left unmarked), and low ⟨`⟩. The sentence *n̄ ò lọ* (*I didn't go*) provides examples of the three syllable types:

- *n̄* — [n̄] — /
- *ò* — [ò] — *not* (negation)
- *lọ* — [l̩] — *to go*

Vowels

Standard Yoruba has seven oral and five nasal vowels. There are no diphthongs in Yoruba; sequences of vowels are pronounced as separate syllables. Dialects differ in the number of vowels they have; see above.

	Oral vowels		Nasal vowels	
	Front	Back	Front	Back
<u>Close</u>	i	u	ĩ	ũ
<u>Close-mid</u>	e	o		
<u>Open-mid</u>	ɛ	ɔ	ẽ	õ
<u>Open</u>	a		(ã)	



Yoruba vowel diagram, adopted from Bamgboṣe (1969:166). Oral vowels are marked by black dots, while the coloured regions indicate the ranges in possible quality of the nasal vowels.

- In some cases, the phonetic realization of these vowels is noticeably different from what the symbol suggests:
 - The oral /i/ is close front [i], and the nasal /ĩ/ varies between close front [ĩ] and near-close front [ĩ̟].^[14]
 - The oral /u/ is close back [u], and the nasal /ũ/ varies between close near-back [ũ̟], close back [ũ], near-close near-back [ũ̟̞] and near-close back [ũ̟̞̞].^[14]
 - The oral /e, o/ are close-mid [e, o], and do not have nasal counterparts.^[14]
 - The oral /ɛ/ is open-mid [ɛ], and the nasal /ẽ/ varies between mid [ẽ̟] and open-mid [ẽ̟̞].^[14]
 - The oral /ɔ/ is near-open [ɔ̟], and the nasal /õ/ varies between open-mid [õ̟̞] and near-open [õ̟̞̞].^[14]
 - The oral /a/ is central [ä].^[14]

The status of a fifth nasal vowel, [ã], is controversial. Although the sound occurs in speech, several authors have argued it to be not phonemically contrastive; often, it is in free variation with [õ̟̞̞].^[15] Orthographically, nasal vowels are normally represented by an oral vowel symbol followed by ⟨n⟩ (⟨in⟩, ⟨un⟩, ⟨ɛn⟩, ⟨ɔn⟩), except in case of the [n] allophone of /l/ (see below) preceding a nasal vowel: *inú* 'inside, belly' is actually pronounced [inũ̟̞̞].^[16]

Consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Postalveolar/ Palatal	Velar		Glottal
				plain	labial	
<u>Nasal</u>	m			ŋ ~ ɲ		
<u>Stop</u>	b	t d	ʃ	k g	k̠p̠ g̠b̠	
<u>Fricative</u>	f	s	ʃ			h
<u>Approximant</u>		l ~ n	j		w	
<u>Rhotic</u>		r				

The voiceless plosives /t/ and /k/ are slightly aspirated; in some Yoruba varieties, /t/ and /d/ are more dental. The rhotic consonant is realized as a flap [ɾ] or, in some varieties (notably Lagos Yoruba), as the alveolar approximant [ɹ].

Like many other languages of the region, Yoruba has the voiceless and voiced labial–velar stops /k̠p̠/ and /g̠b̠/: *pápá* [k̠p̠á k̠p̠á] 'field', *gbogbo* [g̠b̠ō g̠b̠ō] 'all'. Notably, it lacks the common voiceless bilabial stop /p/ so /k̠p̠/ is written as ⟨p⟩.

Yoruba also lacks a phoneme /n/; the letter ⟨n⟩ is used for the sound in the orthography, but strictly speaking, it refers to an allophone of /l/ immediately preceding a nasal vowel.

There is also a syllabic nasal, which forms a syllable nucleus by itself. When it precedes a vowel, it is a velar nasal [ŋ]: *n ò lɔ* [ŋ ò lɔ] 'I didn't go'. In other cases, its place of articulation is homorganic with the following consonant: *ó n lɔ* [ó n lɔ] 'he is going', *ó n fò* [ó n fò] 'he is jumping'.

Tone

Yoruba is a tonal language with three level tones: high, low, and mid (the default tone).^[17] Every syllable must have at least one tone; a syllable containing a long vowel can have two tones. Contour tones (i.e. rising or falling tone melodies) are usually analysed as separate tones occurring on adjacent tone bearing units (morae) and thus have no phonemic status.^[18] Tones are marked by use of the acute accent for high tone (⟨á⟩, ⟨ń⟩) and the grave accent for low tone (⟨à⟩, ⟨ṅ⟩); mid is unmarked, except on syllabic nasals where it is indicated using a macron (⟨a⟩, ⟨ñ⟩). Examples:

- H: *ó bẹ* [ó bẹ́] 'he jumped'; *síbí* [síbí] 'spoon'
- M: *ó bẹ* [ó bē] 'he is forward'; *ara* [ā r ā] 'body'
- L: *ó bẹ* [ó bè] 'he asks for pardon'; *òkò* [òkò] 'spear'.

Tonality effects and computer-coded documents

Written Yoruba includes diacritical marks not available on conventional computer keyboards, requiring some adaptations. In particular, the use of the subdots and tone marks are not represented, so many Yoruba documents simply omit them. Asubiario Toluwase, in his 2014 paper,^[19] points out that the use of these diacritics can affect the retrieval of Yoruba documents by popular search engines. Therefore, their omission can have a significant impact on online research.

Assimilation and elision

When a word precedes another word beginning with a vowel, assimilation or deletion ('elision') of one of the vowels often takes place.^[20] In fact, since syllables in Yoruba normally end in a vowel, and most nouns start with one, it is a very common phenomenon, and it is absent only in very slow, unnatural speech. The orthography here follows speech in that word divisions are normally not indicated in words that are contracted as a result of assimilation or elision: *ra ẹja* → *rẹja* 'buy fish'. Sometimes however, authors may choose to use an inverted comma to indicate an elided vowel as in *ní ilé* → *n'ílé* 'in the house'.

Long vowels within words usually signal that a consonant has been elided word-internally. In such cases, the tone of the elided vowel is retained: *àdìrò* → *ààrò* 'hearth'; *koríko* → *koóko* 'grass'; *òtító* → *òótó* 'truth'.

Grammar

Yoruba is a highly-isolating language.^[21] Its basic constituent order is subject–verb–object,^[22] as in *ó nà Adé* 'he beat Adé'. The bare verb stem denotes a completed action, often called perfect; tense and aspect are marked by preverbal particles such as *ń* 'imperfect/present continuous', *tí* 'past'. Negation is expressed by a preverbal particle *kò*. Serial verb constructions are common, as in many other languages of West Africa.

Although Yoruba has no grammatical gender,^[23] it has a distinction between human and non-human nouns. Probably a remainder of the noun class system of Proto-Niger–Congo, the distinction is only apparent in the fact that the two groups require different interrogative particles: *tani* for human nouns ('who?') and *kini* for non-human nouns ('what?'). The associative construction (covering possessive/genitive and related notions) consists of juxtaposing nouns in the order modified-modifier as in *inú àpótí* {inside box} 'the inside of the box', *filà Àkàndé* 'Akande's cap' or *àpótí aṣo* 'box for clothes'.^[24] More than two nouns can be juxtaposed: *relùwè abẹ́ ilẹ́* (railway under ground) 'underground railway', *inú àpótí aṣo* 'the inside of the clothes box'. In the rare case that it results in two possible readings, disambiguation is left to the context. Plural nouns are indicated by a plural word.^[22]

There are two 'prepositions': *ní* 'on, at, in' and *sí* 'onto, towards'. The former indicates location and absence of movement, and the latter encodes location/direction with movement.^[25] Position and direction are expressed by the prepositions in combination with spatial relational nouns like *orí* 'top', *apá* 'side', *inú* 'inside', *etí* 'edge', *abẹ́* 'under', *ilẹ́* 'down', etc. Many of the spatial relational terms are historically related to body-part terms.

Arabic influence

The wide adoption of imported religions and civilizations such as Islam and Christianity has had impact both on written and spoken Yoruba. In his *Arabic-English Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Quran and Sunnah*, Yoruba Muslim scholar Abu-Abdullah Adelabu argued Islam has enriched African languages by providing them with technical and cultural augmentations with Swahili and Somali in East Africa and Turanci Hausa and Wolof in West Africa the most beneficiaries. Adelabu, a Ph D graduate from Damascus cited—among many other common usages—the following words to be Yoruba's derivatives of Arabic vocabularies:^[26]

Some loanwords

- *Sanma*: Heaven or sky, from السماء
- *alubarika*: blessing, from البركة
- *alumaani*: wealth, money, resources, from المال

Among commonly Arabic words used in Yoruba are names of the days such as *Atalata* (الثلاثاء) for Tuesday, *Alaruba* (الأربعاء) for Wednesday, *Alamisi* (الخميس) for Thursday, and *Jimoh* (الجمعة, Jumu'ah) for Friday. By far *Ọjọ Jimoh* is the most favourably used. It is usually preferred to the unpleasant word for Friday, *Ẹ̀tì*, which means failure, laziness or abandonment.^[27] Ultimately, the standard words for the days of the week are Àìkú, Ajé, Ìṣẹ́gun, Ọjọ́rú, Ọjọ́bọ, Ẹ̀tì, Àbámẹ́ta, for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday respectively. Friday remains *Eti* in Yoruba language.

Literature

Yoruba has an extensive body of literature.

Spoken literature

- Odu Ifa

- Oriki
- Ewi
- Esa
- Apara
- Alo
- Rara
- Iremoje
- Bolojo
- Ijala
- Ajangbode
- Ijeke

Written literature

- Wande Abimbola
- Reverend Samuel Johnson, Anla Ogun
- Fayemi Fatunde Fakayode, Aare Agbefaga of Yorubaland
- Adebisi Aromolaran, king of Ijesaland
- Daniel Olorunfemi Fagunwa
- Adebayo Faleti
- Akinwunmi Isola
- Obo Aba Hisanjani
- Duro Ladipo
- J.F. Odunjo
- Afolabi Olabimtan
- Sobowole Sowande
- Wole Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature
- Amos Tutuola
- Lawuyi Ogunniran
- Tunde Adekunle
- Julius K. Fakinlede
- Kola Tubosun
- Tunji Opadotun
- Akinyele Adetunji
- Sayo Oyeerinde

Music

- KUKU, Nigerian American singer-songwriter, native Yoruba speakers.
- Ibeyi, Cuban francophone sister duo, native Yoruba speakers.
- Sakara, a Yoruba song originating from Abeokuta, Ogun Nigeria. One of the first performers of this type of music was in Lagos in 1930s.
- Apala, Apala (or Akpala) is a music genre originally developed by the Yoruba people of Nigeria, during the country's history as a colony of the British Empire. It is a percussion-based style that originated in the late 1970s.

Dance

- Bolojo
- Ajangbode
- Ijeke

See also

- Yoruba numerals
- The Yoruba newspaper Alaroye

Notes and references

Notes

1. Yoruba (<https://www.ethnologue.com/language/yor>) at *Ethnologue* (22nd ed., 2019)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Yoruba" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yoru1245>). *Glottolog* 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Laurie Bauer, 2007, *The Linguistics Student's Handbook*, Edinburgh
4. Mikael Parkvall, "Världens 100 största språk 2007" (The World's 100 Largest Languages in 2007), in *Nationalencyklopedin* estimates more than 27 million.
5. *Metzler Lexikon Sprache* (4th ed. 2010) estimates roughly 30 million based on earlier estimates and population growth figures.
6. *Ethnologue* 22 estimates 39.8 million.
7. Heine, Bernd; Nurse, Derek (2000). *African Languages: An Introduction* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=C7XhcYoFxaQC&pg=PA294>). Cambridge University Press. p. 294. ISBN 978-0-521-66629-9.
8. Adetugbọ 1973:192-3. (See also the section Dialects.)
9. This widely followed classification is based on Adetugbọ's (1982) dialectological study; the classification originated in his 1967 PhD thesis *The Yoruba Language in Western Nigeria: Its Major Dialect Areas*, ProQuest 288034744 (<https://search.proquest.com/docview/288034744>). See also Adetugbọ 1973:183-193.
10. Adetugbọ 1973:185.
11. Cf. for example the following remark by Adetugbọ (1967, as cited in Fagborun 1994:25): "While the orthography agreed upon by the missionaries represented to a very large degree the phonemes of the Abẹokuta dialect, the morpho-syntax reflected the Ọyọ-Ibadan dialects".
12. "Yoruba...written in a version of the Arabic script known as Ajami (or Ajamiyya)." [1] (<https://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/afs/NigerianSurveyTour2007/NigerianSurveyTour.html>)
13. FALOLA, TOYIN; AKINYEMI, AKINTUNDE (2016-06-20). *Encyclopedia of the Yoruba* (<https://books.google.com/?id=jep3DAAQBAJ&pg=PA194&dq=yoruba+ajami#v=onepage&q=yoruba%20ajami&f=false>). Indiana University Press. p. 194. ISBN 9780253021564.
14. Bamgboṣe (1969:166)
15. Notably, Ayo Bamgboṣe (1966:8).
16. Abraham, in his *Dictionary of Modern Yoruba*, deviates from this by explicitly indicating the nasality of the vowel; thus, *inú* is found under *inún*, etc.

17. Several authors have argued that the mid-tone is not specified underlyingly but rather is assigned by a *default rule* (Pulleyblank 1986, Folarin 1987, Akinlabi 1985):
 rí 'see' aṣọ 'clothing' → ráṣọ 'see clothing', contrasted with rí 'see' ọbẹ 'knife' → rọ́bẹ 'see a knife'
 In the first example, the final vowel of the verb *rí* is deleted but its high tone easily attaches to the first syllable of *aṣọ*, the mid tone of which disappears without a trace. In the second example, the Low tone of the first syllable of *ọbẹ* is not as easily deleted; it causes a downstep (marked by ¹), a lowering of subsequent tones. The ease with which the mid tone gives way is attributed to it not being specified underlyingly. Cf. Bamgboṣe 1966:9 (who calls the downstep effect 'the assimilated low tone').
18. Cf. Bamgboṣe 1966:6: *The so-called glides [...] are treated in this system as separate tones occurring on a sequence of two syllables.*
19. Asubiaro, Toluwase V. (2014). "Effects of Diacritics on Web Search Engines' Performance for Retrieval of Yoruba Documents". *Journal of Library and Information Studies*. **12** (1): 1–19. doi:[10.6182/jlis.2014.12\(1\).001](https://doi.org/10.6182/jlis.2014.12(1).001) (<https://doi.org/10.6182%2Fjlis.2014.12%281%29.001>).
20. See Bamgboṣe 1965a for more details. See also Ward 1952:123–133 ('Chapter XI: Abbreviations and Elisions').
21. Karlsson, F. *Yleinen kielitiede*. ("General linguistics") Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1998.
22. Rowlands, Evan Colyn. (1969). *Teach Yourself Yoruba*. English Universities Press: London.
23. Ogunbowale, P. O. (1970). *The Essentials of the Yoruba Language*. University of London Press: London.
24. (Bamgboṣe 1966:110, Rowlands 1969:45-6)
25. (Sachnine 1997:19)
26. *DELAB International Newsmagazine*, November 2005 [1465-4814](https://www.worldcat.org/search?fq=x0:jrn&q=n2:1465-4814) (<https://www.worldcat.org/search?fq=x0:jrn&q=n2:1465-4814>)
27. A lecture by Abu-Abdullah Adelabu of AWQAF Africa, London titled: "The History Of Islam in 'The Black History'" *DELAB International Newsmagazine*, April 2003 [1465-4814](https://www.worldcat.org/search?fq=x0:jrn&q=n2:1465-4814) (<https://www.worldcat.org/search?fq=x0:jrn&q=n2:1465-4814>)

References

- Adetugbọ, Abiodun (1982). "Towards a Yoruba Dialectology". In Afọlayan (ed.). *Yoruba Language and Literature*. pp. 207–224.
- Afọlayan, Adebisi (ed.) (1982). *Yoruba language and literature*. Ife / Ibadan: University of Ife Press / Ibadan University Press.
- Ajayi, J.F. Ade (1960). "How Yoruba was Reduced to Writing". *Odu: A Journal of Yoruba, Edo and Related Studies* (8): 49–58.
- Bamgboṣe, Ayọ (1965a). "Assimilation and contraction in Yoruba". *Journal of West African Languages* (2): 21–27.
- Bamgboṣe, Ayọ (1965b). *Yoruba Orthography*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Bamgboṣe, Ayọ (1969). "Yoruba". In Elizabeth Dunstan (ed.). *Twelve Nigerian Languages*. New York: Africana Publishing Corp. p. 166. ISBN 0-8419-0031-0.
- Fagborun, J. Gbenga (1994). *The Yoruba Koiné – Its History and Linguistic Innovations*. LINCOM Linguistic Edition vol. 6. München/Newcastle: LINCOM Europe. ISBN 3-929075-47-4.
- Fresco, Max (1970). *Topics in Yoruba Dialect Phonology*. (Studies in African Linguistics Supplement Vol. 1). Los Angeles: University of California, Dept. of Linguistics/ASC.
- Ladipọ, Duro (1972). *Ọba kò so (The king did not hang) — Opera by Duro Ladipọ*. (Transcribed and translated by R.G. Armstrong, Robert L. Awujọla and Val Ọlayẹmi from a

tape recording by R. Curt Wittig). Ibadan: Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

- Oyètádé, B. Akíntúndé & Buba, Malami (2000) 'Hausa Loan Words in Yorùbá', in Wolff & Gensler (eds.) *Proceedings of the 2nd WoCAL, Leipzig 1997*, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe, 241–260.
- Oyenuga, Soji www.YorubaForKidsAbroad.com (2007). "Yoruba". In Soji and Titi Oyenuga (ed.). *Yoruba For Kids Abroad - Learn Yoruba In 27 Days*. Saskatoon, Canada: Gaptel Innovative Solutions Inc. pp. 27 days.

History

- Adetugbò, Abiòdun (1973). "The Yoruba Language in Yoruba History" (<https://archive.org/details/sourcesofyorubah0000biob>). In Biobaku, Saburi O. (ed.). *Sources of Yoruba History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 176–204 (<https://archive.org/details/sourcesofyorubah0000biob/page/176>). ISBN 0-19-821669-6.
- Hair, P.E.H. (1967). "The Early Study of Yoruba, 1825-1850" (<https://archive.org/details/earlystudyofyoruba0000hair>). *The Early Study of Nigerian Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Law, R.C.C. (1973a). "Contemporary Written Sources". In Biobaku, S.O. (ed.). *Sources of Yoruba History* (<https://archive.org/details/sourcesofyorubah0000biob>). pp. 9 (<https://archive.org/details/sourcesofyorubah0000biob/page/9>)–24.
- Law, R.C.C. (1973b). "Traditional History". In Biobaku, S.O. (ed.). *Sources of Yoruba History* (<https://archive.org/details/sourcesofyorubah0000biob>). pp. 25 (<https://archive.org/details/sourcesofyorubah0000biob/page/25>)–40.

Dictionaries

- Abraham, Roy Clive (1958). *Dictionary of Modern Yoruba*. London: University of London Press.
- CMS (Canon C.W. Wakeman, ed.) (1950) [1937]. *A Dictionary of the Yoruba language*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Delanò, Oloye Isaac (1958). *Atúmò ede Yoruba [short dictionary and grammar of the Yoruba language]*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Sachnine, Michka (1997). *Dictionnaire yorùbá-français, suivi d'un index français-yorùbâ*. Paris: Karthala.

Grammars and sketches

- Adéwọlé, L.O. (2000). *Beginning Yorùbá (Part I)*. Monograph Series no. 9. Cape Town: CASAS.
- Adéwọlé, L.O. (2001). *Beginning Yorùbá (Part II)*. Monograph Series no. 10. Cape Town: CASAS.
- Bamgboṣe, Ayo (1966). *A Grammar of Yoruba*. [West African Languages Survey / Institute of African Studies]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barber, Karin (1985). *Yorùbá Dùn ún So: a beginners' course in Yorùbá* (1st ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0300029581.
- Crowther, Samuel Ajayi (1852). *Yoruba Grammar*. London. The first grammar of Yoruba.
- Rowlands, E.C. (1969). *Teach Yourself Yoruba*. London: The English Universities Press.
- Ward, Ida (1952). *An introduction to the Yoruba language*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons.
- Yetunde, Antonia & Schleicher, Folarin (2006). *Colloquial Yoruba*. London: Taylor & Francis Ltd (Routledge).

External links

- [Omniglot: Yoruba orthography \(http://www.omniglot.com/writing/yoruba.htm\)](http://www.omniglot.com/writing/yoruba.htm)
 - [Yoruba dictionary \(http://www.yorubadictionary.com/\)](http://www.yorubadictionary.com/)
 - [Yoruba Translation - Free online translation service instantly Yorùbá. \(http://yorubatranslation.com\)](http://yorubatranslation.com)
 - [kasahorow Yoruba Dictionary \(http://dictionary.kasahorow.com/all/yo\)](http://dictionary.kasahorow.com/all/yo)
 - [Ọrọ èdè Yorùbá \(http://oroede.sourceforge.net/\)](http://oroede.sourceforge.net/)
 - [xLingua: Yoruba-Online-Dictionary English-Yoruba / Yoruba-English \(http://yoruba.xLingua.net/yo/\)](http://yoruba.xLingua.net/yo/)
 - [Sabere d'owo Yoruba video drama series \(https://web.archive.org/web/20070712050138/http://media.revver.com/broadcast/28158/video.mov\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20070712050138/http://media.revver.com/broadcast/28158/video.mov). Radio Abeokuta (2006).
 - [Yoruba Grammar \(http://learn101.org/yoruba.php\)](http://learn101.org/yoruba.php)
 - [Pan-African Localization \(https://web.archive.org/web/20080402092742/http://www.panafril10n.org/wikidoc/pmwiki.php/PanAfrLoc/Yoruba\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20080402092742/http://www.panafril10n.org/wikidoc/pmwiki.php/PanAfrLoc/Yoruba) page for Yoruba
 - [Yoruba in North America \(http://www.yorubanation.org/\)](http://www.yorubanation.org/)
 - [Journal of West African Languages: Yoruba \(https://web.archive.org/web/20120302065000/http://www.journalofwestafricanlanguages.org/Yoruba.aspx\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20120302065000/http://www.journalofwestafricanlanguages.org/Yoruba.aspx)
 - [yorubaweb.com \(http://www.yorubaweb.com\)](http://www.yorubaweb.com)
 - [Yoruba blog \(features bilingual texts in Yoruba and English, including folklore\) \(http://www.theyorubablog.com/\)](http://www.theyorubablog.com/)
 - [Abibitumi Kasa Yorùbá Language Resources \(http://www.abibitumikasa.com/forums/forumdisplay.php/907-Yoruba-Language-Resources\)](http://www.abibitumikasa.com/forums/forumdisplay.php/907-Yoruba-Language-Resources)
 - [Yorùbá Yé Mi - A Beginning Yorùbá Textbook \(https://coerll.utexas.edu/yemi/\)](https://coerll.utexas.edu/yemi/)
-

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Yoruba_language&oldid=968666670"

This page was last edited on 20 July 2020, at 19:25 (UTC).

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.